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TO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

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SUBJECT: EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT,
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND HEALTH CONFERENCE

REF: A. STATE 18520
[B. STATE 42286](#)

¶1. SUMMARY: The Department convened a regional Environment, Science, Technology and Health (ESTH) Officers Conference (ESTHOC) on April 15 - 17 for officers and foreign service nationals (FSNs) covering ESTH issues at posts in the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region. The Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science (OES) works with regional bureaus to hold ESTHOC conferences in order to provide up-to-date information and training to the field and provide an exchange among ESTH officers, FSNs, Washington-based offices, and outside experts. - END SUMMARY

¶2. The Department convened a regional ESTHOC on April 15 - 17 for Department officers and foreign service nationals covering ESTH issues at posts in the EAP region. OES works with regional bureaus to hold ESTHOC conferences in order to provide up-to-date information and training to the field and provide an exchange among ESTH officers, FSNs, Washington-based offices, and selected outside experts.

¶3. This year's EAP ESTHOC was chaired by Acting Assistant Secretary for Oceans, Environment and Science Reno Harnish, hosted by Ambassador Cameron Hume, and cosponsored by EAP and the Department's Regional Environment Offices based in Bangkok and Suva. The event brought together Ambassadors Harnish and Hume; Ambassador Robert Loftis, the Special Representative for Avian Influenza and Pandemic Preparedness; 21 officers covering ESTH issues in the field; four FSNs; five officers from OES, one from EAP, and officials from AID/Jakarta, CDC/Jakarta, DOC/NOAA, DOD/NAMRU (Bankgok), and EPA/Office of International Affairs. Two representatives of the ASEAN secretariat gave presentations, as did speakers from the Asian Development Bank, private enterprise and environmental organizations.

¶4. Ambassador Hume kicked off the conference, emphasizing the importance of ESTH issues and giving examples of initiatives he has undertaken in Jakarta. The ambassador also gave the closing speech, in which he urged officers to take a pro-active role in advancing their agendas, including by taking innovative initiatives to generate media coverage. The ambassador argued that ESTH issues are an integral element of the Secretary's "smart power" strategy, and discussed how he has incorporated these issues at the core of the new "Comprehensive Partnership" between the U.S. and Indonesia. America's strength in science and technology is respected throughout the world, and can help break through negative perceptions, including in major Muslim nations such as Indonesia. The U.S. must also recognize Indonesia's centrality in the global ecological arena: Indonesia is #1 in marine biodiversity, #2 in terrestrial diversity, but #3 in carbon emissions when land use impacts are taken into account. In addition, Ambassador Hume hosted a reception for all conference participants that provided an opportunity to meet with Indonesian government officials and NGOs.

¶5. OES Acting Assistant Secretary Harnish also welcomed conference participants and gave a talk on the Obama

Administration's Global and Regional ESTH priorities. The diplomatic challenges of the U.S. are increasingly driven in part by competition for natural resources, the impact of human actions on ecological systems, health threats, and the impact of these factors on prosperity and security. President Obama has signaled his commitment to addressing climate change, and we are now leading by example, helping spearhead a global "Green New Deal" by including investments in "green collar jobs" through energy efficiency and renewables in our stimulus funding. The Secretary's first trip abroad, in which she visited China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea in February, accompanied by Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern, sent a strong message that EAP and environmental issues are now at the top of the U.S. agenda. OES global priorities focus on: forging consensus on climate policy; engaging with China on global environmental impacts; promoting sustainable use of forests, wildlife, and marine resources; improving access to safe water and sanitation; enhancing international cooperation with respect to polar regions; confronting chronic and infectious diseases; promoting the Global Positioning System; and strengthening science and technology partnerships, especially regarding energy and climate and with Islamic communities. A/S Harnish also led a discussion that generated specific proposals for how Washington and posts can improve our effectiveness in the region.

¶6. Other highlights included a briefing and discussion on

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Administration climate policy with Deputy Special Envoy for Climate Change Jonathan Pershing. Ambassador Robert Loftis joined a panel on Avian Influenza and Pandemic Preparedness. EPA/Office of International Affairs East Asia Team Leader Mark Kasman spoke on EPA's priorities and clean energy programs. Several panels featured presentations by officers from Embassy Jakarta and other posts in the region exchanging information, analysis, and best practices in ESTH diplomacy.

¶7. OES reiterates its appreciation for the extensive support provided by Embassy Jakarta (reftel State 42286) and all conference participants. This is one of a series of training opportunities provided by OES, complementing ESTH courses offered at the Foreign Service Institute.

¶8. The conference agenda, background papers and speakers' presentations are available from OES/PCI Regional Policy Advisor Erwin Rose.

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